

# CALIFORNIA ABALONE ASSOCIATION, INC.

NO. 6 HARBOR WAY, BOX 155  
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA 93109

February 23, 2008

Dear Blue Ribbon Task Force Members

The task of protecting California's marine resources is an important one and we recognize your diligent effort to this end. As members of the California Abalone Association (CAA) we appreciate this opportunity to offer some thoughts for your consideration. In your evaluation of the protections proposed for the South East Farallon Islands please consider the following:

- The MLPA did not set out to eliminate commercial fisheries but rather to among other things "...help sustain, conserve, and protect marine life populations, *including those of economic value*, and rebuild those that are depleted." (California Department of Fish and Game, MLPA Summary)<sup>1</sup>
- Historically, the Farallon Islands were a significant part of the California commercial red abalone fishery. When the moratorium of the commercial fishery was introduced statewide in 1997, the red abalone resource at the Farallons was robust. Furthermore, there is no scientific documentation of a decline in the abalone resource at The Farallon Islands. In fact, the Department of Fish and Game's recent observations confirm that abalone populations there remain healthy.<sup>2</sup>
- The California Abalone Association (CAA) is currently working collaboratively with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) as a member of the Abalone Advisory Group (AAG). Other organizations represented on the AAG include: the National Park Service, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, Channel Keepers and recreational diver representatives. The purpose of the AAG is to develop advanced fishery management options to present to the Fish and Game Commission for a limited fishery for red abalone at San Miguel Island.
- If a fishery is approved it will be a model of comprehensive sustainable fisheries management that we believe could be applied to the abalone resource at the Farallon Islands.

For many years the CAA has worked constructively with the conservation groups and others at the Farallon Islands. In the past, issues of vessel distance from shore, compressor noise and speed limits were agreed to with input from the Farallon National Marine Sanctuary, DFG, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Coast Federation Fisherman's Association, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the local commercial divers. The results from this collaboration were successfully included in the commercial abalone regulations.

Given the very real potential for an approved model sustainable red abalone management plan for San Miguel Island, the continued existence of a healthy population of red abalone at the Farallon's and our proven history to work collaboratively for responsible fishery management, we respectfully request that your recommendation to the Fish and Game Commission accommodates the possibility to reopen the commercial red abalone fishery at the Farallon Islands.

Sincerely,



Christopher Voss

President, California Abalone Association

On behalf of the CAA Executive Board and members

Harry Liqournik, Vice President

Craig Brooker, Treasurer

John Woodcock, Secretary

Jeff Baldwin, Board Member

Michael Candy, Board Member

Michael Harrington, Board Member

Jim Marshall, Board Member

Gaylord Parkinson, Board Member

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa/background.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Fish and Game Commission meeting; Santa Barbara California. (08-09-2007) agenda item 8.F